

Media Release

Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

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K9 Deputy Recovers Stolen Vehicle – Suspect Arrested- Attached VIN plate had been removed from vehicle in tow



On March 29, 2016, just after 11 AM, 22-year-old Brian Byce from Colorado was arrested for Vehicle Theft, Conducting a Chop Shop, and Altering a VIN number. He was booked at the Camp Verde Detention Center and had since been released on a \$15,000 bond.

BACKGROUND – While driving south on I17, north of the New River area, a YCSO K9 deputy stopped a black 2011 Dodge Ram truck towing an apparent identical truck on a flatbed trailer. The trailer had no visible license plate. The driver was identified as Brian Byce and he was abnormally nervous while speaking with the deputy. Byce could only produce registration for the truck he was driving. He did not have any paperwork for the trailer or the truck being towed. Byce explained that he was coming from Colorado and heading to the Anthem area to sell the truck under tow.



During questioning about both trucks, Byce's answers were confusing as to ownership of identical vehicles. Byce became increasingly nervous as the deputy attempted to gain information. Byce could not adequately explain why he did not have the title for the truck he was about to sell in Anthem. Byce claimed it was a model year 2005. The deputy, who had owned a 2005 Dodge truck, knew immediately the model on the trailer was much newer. It also appeared identical to the 2011 Dodge truck Byce was driving.

As deputies were about to check the VIN number on the truck being towed, Byce admitted previously removing all its VIN numbers because he did not want the buyer to register the vehicle. Deputies then verified the dash VIN plate was missing and the VIN ID on the driver door had been cut away.

When examining the truck being driven by Byce, deputies located a VIN plate on the dash but discovered the VIN ID had been removed from the driver's door. Although the VIN number mounted to the dash came back to a 2011 Dodge truck, deputies remained suspicious because of the missing VIN label on the door. During follow-up with assistance from troopers assigned to the DPS Auto Theft Task Force, deputies discovered the VIN plate on the truck driven by Byce had been removed from the truck in tow. The true VIN record showed the truck was stolen out of Pennsylvania.

At this point, Byce now admitted knowing he was driving a stolen truck. He also acknowledged removing the VIN plate from the truck being towed and attaching it to the stolen truck. He then registered the stolen truck in his home state using the transferred VIN information and was now hoping to dump/sell the stripped truck under tow.

Investigation is ongoing with assistance from the DPS Auto Theft Task Force.

Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260 or the YCSO website:
www.ycsoaz.gov